

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 CIAE-00
COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 /041 W
-----060270 121548Z /53

R 121452Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8428
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY ROME

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USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, FR
SUBJECT: THE LABOR SCENE: MAIRE FALLS IN AGAIN

REF: (A) PARIS 25928, (B) PARIS A-2804, (C) PARIS
25148, (D) PARIS A-256 OF JULY 24

1. SUMMARY: THE LEADERS OF ALL THE MAJOR UNIONS HAVE
MADE THEIR SPEECHES AND HELD THEIR PRESS CONFERENCES.
THE CHIEF RESULT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN THAT THE PCF HAS
AGGRAVATED THE CFDT AND, BY SO DOING, HELPED HEIGHTEN
THE UNCERTAINTY IN LABOR CIRCLES AS TO WHETHER OR NOT
THE COMMUNISTS MEAN TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WITH
THEIR POLITICAL PARTNERS ON UPDATING THE COMMON
PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

2. THE PAST WEEK WAS ONE OF SPEECHES AND PRESS CON-
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FERENCES AMONGST THE TRADE UNIONS. THE HEADS OF THE
CFDT, CGT AND FO ALL GAVE WELL PUBLICIZED MAJOR
ADDRESSES, AND THE LEADERS OF FEN, THE CFTC, AND CGC
HAVE BEEN GIVING PRESS CONFERENCES AND MEDIA INTER-
VIEWS. THE CHIEF OUTCOME OF ALL THIS TALKING, AND
THE ENSUING COMMENTARIES, HAS BEEN A STRONG REACTION
ON THE PART OF THE CFDT TOWARDS THE PCF AND TO A LESSER

EXTENT, THE CGT, FOR -- ONCE AGAIN -- MAKING USE OF AN EDMOND MAIRE SPEECH TO HIT THE PS OVER THE HEAD.

3. IN HIS SEPTEMBER 7 ADDRESS AT STRASBOURG, CFDT LEADER MAIRE HAD CRITICIZED THE PCF PROPOSALS FOR UP-DATING THE COMMON PROGRAM AS, INTER ALIA, THREATENING TO TAKE FRANCE DOWN THE ROAD TO ECONOMIC NATIONALISM, AND SO ISOLATION; AND FAILING TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF AUTOGESTION. HE THEN CRITICIZED THE SOCIALISTS, WHOSE POLICIES HE SAID WERE AMBIGUOUS AND NEEDED CLARIFICATION. THE IMPRESSION BEING CREATED, MAIRE SAID, WAS THAT THE PS WAS DRAGGING ITS FEET IN ITS APPROACH TO SOCIAL REFORM ISSUES, SUCH AS REDUCING SALARY DIFFERENTIALS, AND SO PLAYING INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO SAY THAT THE PS DOESN'T REALLY MEAN TO CHANGE FRENCH SOCIETY. LEST ANYONE MISUNDERSTAND HIS COMMENTS, HOWEVER, MAIRE UNDERSCORED THAT THE CFDT WAS NOT COMMITTED TO THE COMMON PROGRAM, UPDATED OR OTHERWISE; WOULD REMAIN DEDICATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS OWN PLATFORM; AND CALLED AGAIN FOR TRADE UNION UNITY BEFORE THE ELECTIONS, AND AFTERWARDS.

4. THE FOLLOWING DAY, THE HEAD OF THE COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED CGT, SEGUY, GAVE HIS OWN MAJOR ADDRESS IN WHICH HE PICKED UP MAIRE'S CRITICISMS OF THE PS (ONLY); REPEATED THEM, SOMETIMES QUOTING MAIRE; AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THEN SET FORTH TEN QUESTIONS THE "WORKERS" WANTED THE "LEFT" TO ANSWER. NATURALLY, THESE CGT QUESTIONS ARE ADDRESSED TO SUCH POINTS AS THE REDUCTION OF SALARY DIFFERENTIALS, INCREASES IN FAMILY ALLOWANCES, AND "TRADE UNION RIGHTS" ON WHICH THE PS APPEARS TO WANT TO REMAIN AS FLEXIBLE AS POSSIBLE. MOREOVER, AS MORE THAN ONE NON-COMMUNIST HAS NOTED, SOURLY, SEGUY DID NOT MENTION THE PCF POSITIONS BUT TO PRAISE THEM. SEGUY ALSO REITERATED HIS WARNING THAT THE CGT DOES NOT INTEND TO PRESS FOR THE "WORKERS DEMANDS" LESS UNDER A GOVERNMENT OF THE LEFT THAN IT DOES UNDER THE PRESENT REGIME; AND THAT IT HAS NO INTENTION OF HELPING MANAGE THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM.

5. SIMILARLY, THE PCF ORGAN "L'HUMANITE", PICKED UP MAIRE'S CRITICISMS OF THE PS AND PUBLISHED THEM. THAT ARTICLE, NOT UNNATURALLY, STRESSED THAT MAIRE'S CRITICISMS OF THE PS POSITIONS PARALLELED THOSE OF THE PCF; AND CLAIMED BY INFERENCE THAT THE CFDT AND PCF SHARED THE SAME VIEWPOINTS.

6. APPARENTLY STILL SMARTING FROM HIS LAST BRUSH WITH

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USEEC

CURRENT PCF TACTICS (SEE REF C), MAIRE AND THE CFDT
REACTED VIGOROUSLY, EVEN EMOTIONALLY. IN A PUBLISHED
STATEMENT, SUPPLEMENTED BY A PRESS CONFERENCE, THE
CFDT LEADERSHIP DENOUNCED "L'HUMANITE" AND THE PCF
FOR DELIBERATELY MISREPRESENTING THEIR POSITION.
(THE CGT WAS CAREFULLY NOT MENTIONED IN THE WRITTEN
STATEMENT, BUT CAME IN FOR SOME ORAL KICKS AT THE
PRESS CONFERENCE.) THE PCF RESPONSE WAS TO COOLY
PUBLISH THE FULL TEXT OF THE CFDT STATEMENT, FOLLOWED
BY ITS OWN ANALYSIS SUGGESTING THAT THE UNION JUST
DIDN'T UNDERSTAND HOW CLOSE ITS POSITION AND THAT OF
THE PCF REALLY WERE, TOGETHER WITH YET ANOTHER LETTER
FROM PCF LEADER MARCHAIS URGING A PCF-CFDT MEETING TO
DISCUSS THINGS.

6. THE INTENSITY OF THE CFDT RESPONSE TO THE PCF
TACTIC IS INDICATIVE OF A GENERAL NERVOUSNESS ON THE
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PART OF THE UNION'S LEADERSHIP. THE CFDT, AS MAIRE SAID, IS AFRAID THAT THE PS RESPONSE TO THE COMMUNIST PRESSURES ON ISSUES LIKE SALARY DIFFERENTIAL IS TOO VAGUE AND WILL PROVE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. THIS VIEW, MOREOVER, IS NOT CONFINED TO THE CFDT. FEN LEADER HENRY HAS SAID VERY MUCH THE SAME THING IN PUBLIC, WHICH HAS BEEN DULY NOTED BY THE PCF. HOWEVER, THE UNDERLYING NERVOUSNESS IS BASED NOT SO MUCH ON WHAT IS CONSIDERED THE SOCIALISTS' POOR TACTICS AS ON UNCERTAINTY AS TO THE COMMUNISTS' INTENTIONS. THERE IS INCREASING SPECULATION IN LABOR CIRCLES THAT THERE WILL BE NO AGREEMENT ON UPDATING THE COMMON PROGRAM, AND THAT EVEN A RUPTURE IN THE UNION OF THE LEFT MAY BE IN THE OFFING.

7. AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, THE SCENARIO THAT SEEMS TO HAVE WIDEST CURRENCY IN TRADE UNION CIRCLES IS THAT THE POLITICAL PARTIES WILL FAIL TO AGREE ON UPDATING THE COMMON PROGRAM, BUT WILL REMAIN ELECTORAL ALLIES. IN THE EVENT OF A LEFT VICTORY, THIS ARRANGEMENT WOULD ENABLE THE PCF, WITH THE AID OF THE CGT, TO PRESS PIECEMEAL CONCESSIONS OUT OF THEIR PARTNERS IN GOVERNMENT, TURNING FRANCE'S FACTORIES AND OFFICES INTO FORUMS FOR POLITICAL AGITATION IN THE PROCESS (SEE REF D). HARLAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition Event:
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